

# RESIDENCE



RESIDENCE SOHE 2008



1 residence 26 finch street  
beechworth



26 Finch



26 Finch slab wall of kitchen



26 Finch



26 Finch



26 Finch



26 Finch



New building on left



H0352 RESIDENCE LHA  
2015 1.JPG



H0352 RESIDENCE LHA  
2015 2.JPG



H0352 RESIDENCE LHA  
2015 3.JPG



H0352 RESIDENCE LHA  
2015 4.JPG



H0352 RESIDENCE LHA  
2015 5.JPG

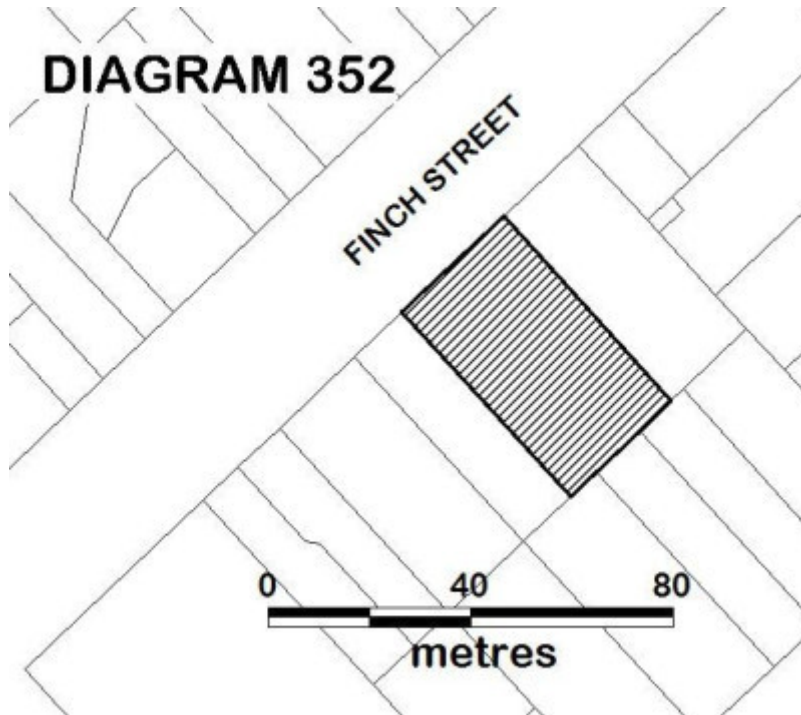


Diagram 352.JPG

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**Location**

26 FINCH STREET BEECHWORTH, INDIGO SHIRE

**Municipality**

INDIGO SHIRE

**Level of significance**

Registered

**Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number**

H0352

**Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO33

## VHR Registration

October 9, 1974

## Amendment to Registration

June 11, 2015

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - June 4, 2015

What is significant?

The Residence at 26 Finch Street, Beechworth, which includes a complex of mainly timber buildings constructed in the mid-nineteenth century. These include a two-storey cottage with what was originally a single-storey kitchen at the rear and an adjacent single-storey building - all constructed by 1861 - and a breezeway connecting the buildings which was added in 1870.

### History Summary

The two-storey weatherboard cottage facing Finch Street and its kitchen at the rear were constructed c1860, probably by the gold miner Joseph Hollows. The design of the house may have been based on one published in an American pattern book, Calvert Vaux's *Villas and Cottages* (1857). The adjacent brick and weatherboard building was constructed at about the same time, on what was then an adjacent block of land, and was extended in c1865. In 1870 another weatherboard structure was built to connect the two buildings. The house has been used as a residence since it was built. During the early twentieth century it was owned by the Zwar brothers, who owned the Beechworth Tannery, the largest country tannery in Australia and an important local employer, who rented the house to an employee. In 2007 a single-storey extension was added at the rear of the old house.

### Description Summary

The Residence is a complex of mainly timber buildings. Facing Finch Street is a two-storey Picturesque Gothic style timber building (c1860) with a steeply pitched gable roof, an attic window in the gable, decorative bargeboards and a turned timber finial. It has a narrow modern verandah at the front. There are two rooms on the ground floor and an attic above, reached by means of a steep narrow staircase. This building displays several early features, including unusual timber framing, which appears to be an early experimental example of stud framing, and a hessian ceiling in one room. At the rear of this is a single-storey building, originally used as a kitchen (c1860), with walls of vertical timber slabs (now concealed, apart from one section in the entrance vestibule) and clad externally with weatherboards. It has an unusual type of sash window where the bottom pane is propped open rather than sliding. Parallel to these structures to the north-east is another single-storey gabled weatherboard building with one end wall of brick. Some remnant paint finishes and wallpaper survive on one interior wall. Connecting these two structures is a gable-roofed timber breezeway open on one end, with the original shingles preserved beneath later corrugated iron. The 2007 extension at the rear is an L-shaped structure adjoining one end of the former kitchen building, which contains a bathroom, laundry, kitchen and living area.

### How is it significant?

The Residence at 26 Finch Street, Beechworth is of architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criteria for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

Criterion A Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history

Criterion B Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history

Criterion D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects

Why is it significant?

The Residence at 26 Finch Street, Beechworth is significant at the state level for the following reasons:

The Residence at 26 Finch Street is historically significant as a largely intact example of the Picturesque Gothic style houses built in country Victoria in the mid-nineteenth century. It is an outstanding example of the modest houses built at this time in rural Victoria, and assists in an understanding of housing conditions in rural Victoria during the gold rushes. [Criterion A]

The Residence at 26 Finch Street is architecturally significant as a surviving example of a residence dating from the gold rush era. It contributes to an understanding of vernacular architecture in Victoria, demonstrating early construction techniques and materials, as well as the difficulties of building during the gold rushes, when there were shortages of both materials and skilled labour. These include the use of vertical slabs, unseasoned weatherboards, timbers showing a variety of early milling techniques and unusual timber sizes, and eclectic joinery techniques. The building exhibits what appears to be an early stage in the development of stud framing. It is a rare example of a Picturesque design which was possibly sourced from an American pattern book. The kitchen demonstrates the contemporary practice of constructing a kitchen detached from the rest of the house. [Criteria B and D]

The Residence at 26 Finch Street, Beechworth is also significant for the following reasons, but not at the State level:

The Residence at 26 Finch Street is significant for its association with the early history of Beechworth and the development of the Ovens goldfields. It is one of Beechworth's oldest surviving houses and is a reminder of the town's gold rush prosperity and the success of many of the early gold miners. It is associated with the owners in the early twentieth century, the Zwar brothers, who owned the Beechworth Tannery, the largest country tannery in Australia, who made important contributions to the economic and social life of the town. The house forms an essential element in the streetscape of this historic town.

## Permit Exemptions

### General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must [notify](#) the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

## **Specific Exemptions:**

It should be noted that Permit Exemptions can be granted at the time of registration (under s.42(4) of the Heritage Act). Permit Exemptions can also be applied for and granted after registration (under s.66 of the Heritage Act)

### **General Condition: 1.**

All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object.

### **General Condition: 2.**

Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible.

### **General Condition: 3.**

All works should be informed by Conservation Management Plans prepared for the place. The Executive Director is not bound by any Conservation Management Plan, and permits still must be obtained for works suggested in any Conservation Management Plan.

### **General Conditions: 4.**

Nothing in this determination prevents the Heritage Council from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

### **General Condition: 5.**

Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the relevant responsible authority, where applicable.

## **SPECIFIC PERMIT EXEMPTIONS**

### **Exterior:**

- . Removal of non-original items such as air conditioners, pipe work, ducting, wiring, antennae, aerials etc, and making good.
- . Installation and repairing of damp proofing by either injection method or grout pocket method.
- . Installation of external fixtures and fittings such as, hot water services and taps in a manner not detrimental to the cultural heritage significance of the place.
- . Removal of non-original fence.

### **Interior:**

- . Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of any original paint, wallpaper or other decorative scheme.
- . Installation, removal or replacement of non-original carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.
- . Installation, removal or replacement of non-original curtain tracks, rods and blinds.
- . Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and other wall mounted art.
- . Removal of non-original door and window furniture including, hinges, locks, knobsets and sash lifts.
- . Refurbishment of existing bathrooms, toilets and kitchens including removal, installation or replacement of sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, wall and floor coverings.
- . Removal of tiling or concrete slabs in wet areas provided there is no damage to or alteration of original structure or fabric.

. Installation, removal or replacement of ducted, hydronic or concealed radiant type heating provided that the installation does not damage existing skirtings and architraves and that the central plant is concealed.

. Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring.

. Installation of new fire hydrant services including sprinklers, fire doors and elements affixed to non-original plaster surfaces.

Modern addition to rear of the nineteenth century buildings and modern carport:

. All internal works

. Demolition (part or full)

. Replacement of all doors, windows, roofing and raingoods like for like.

## Theme

6. Building towns cities and the garden state

Construction dates 1860, 1865, 1870,

Heritage Act Categories Registered place,

Other Names STONEHAVEN,

Hermes Number 101

Property Number

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## History

Contextual history

Beechworth owes its existence to the discovery of gold in 1852. The Beechworth area was first settled by squatters from 1837, but the discovery of gold resulted in a rush of miners to the area - about 8,000 arriving by November that year. The British, Chinese and Americans were the largest immigrant groups on the goldfields. The Ovens was an important river system in north-east Victoria and gave its name to the goldfields in this area. The town developed around the Gold Commissioner's Camp, established in 1852 on the granite hill on the north bank of Spring Creek. The township was first known as Mayday Hills, but when surveyed in 1853, it was named Beechworth. The main overland route between Melbourne and Sydney passed through the town until the 1870s (when the railway was built further to the west), and until then Beechworth was one of the richest towns in Victoria and the financial and administrative centre of the north-east .

Most of the earliest shelters on the Ovens goldfields were canvas tents. For many years labour was scarce and expensive and when the diggers decided to build a more permanent home they usually built it themselves. It was usually a modest structure, using primitive building techniques and readily available materials such as split slabs and logs, and gradually extended this as time and funds allowed. During the late 1850s and early 1860s in Beechworth architect-designed buildings tended to be confined to government buildings and churches. There were few if any architect-designed houses. This changed with the increasing prosperity of the miners, and especially after the election of a Council in 1856 and the introduction of building regulations. Many of the town's major buildings were erected during the following five years, including the Ovens District Hospital (1856, VHR H358) and the Burke Museum (VHR H345, begun in 1857 by the Young Men's Association as a hall and library), and the first town hall was built in 1859. By the early 1860s a group of important administrative buildings, known as the Beechworth Justice Precinct (VHR H1464), had been completed along the south side of Ford Street, and a large gaol (VHR H1549) was begun to the north of this in 1858. The Beechworth Lunatic Asylum, later the Mayday Hills Hospital (VHR H1864-67) was built in 1864-67, and the landmark post office (VHR H867) was completed in 1870.

The Ovens gold rushes peaked in 1857, and during the following two decades the population of Beechworth decreased (though the last mining company in the district only closed in 1956). Despite the decline in the gold industry, the town was sustained well into the twentieth century by the presence of the government institutions founded in the 1850s and 1860s: the asylum and the gaol.

Tourism has now become a major industry in Beechworth. Tourism began in the 1880s with the town's reputation as a health resort and picturesque beauty spot. The declining prosperity of the town had the advantage that the post-World War II development, that led to the destruction of so much of Victoria's nineteenth century fabric during the 1950s-70s, was avoided. At this time there was an increasing awareness of the importance of Victoria's early history and heritage. In the 1960s the National Trust was active in classifying Beechworth's early buildings, and efforts began to restore buildings which had fallen into disrepair. The retention of much of the town's historic character has now made it a popular tourist destination.

#### Place history

26 Finch Street is located in a residential area that was part of the first surveyed subdivision of Beechworth. The land now known as 26 Finch Street was originally two adjoining lots: Lot 17 and part of Lot 18. Buildings were constructed on both lots c1860. In 1861 Lot 18 was subdivided into two, and its western part (with its timber building) was consolidated into Lot 17, so that 26 Finch Street was then made up of Lot 17 and part of Lot 18.

The 2006 Conservation Management plan by Deborah Kemp notes that there is little documentary evidence for the date of construction of the various parts of the residence at 26 Finch Street. It notes that the chaotic nature of the gold rushes meant that in the early days the legalities of home and land ownership were often not observed, and rate books do not accurately record the early history of this site. However evidence for the history of the buildings on the site has been obtained from physical evidence, such as construction details and building materials. The sequence of construction is thought to be as follows (see p 12 for diagram):

#### *a) Buildings 1 and 3*

The first building on the site was the two-storey timber cottage (Building 1), which documentary evidence suggests was constructed in the late 1850s or early 1860s. The 1861 ratebooks note the land (then only part of the present block) as being 22 feet x 165 feet, on which were located a two-storey weatherboard house (24 feet x 16 feet) with a shingle roof, and a kitchen (18 feet 6 inches x 10 feet 9 inches) also with a shingle roof. The kitchen is likely to have been the vernacular vertical slab and timber frame building on the site which is now part of Building 3. The same buildings were recorded on the site in 1863.

#### *b) Building 2*

By 1865 the boundaries of 26 Finch Street had been extended to the north and consolidated with the adjoining block of land, on which there was already a small house, constructed also in the late 1850s or early 1860s. It was now noted in the ratebooks that on the subject site, as well as the two buildings noted above (Buildings 1 and 3) there was now a brick and weatherboard structure (20 feet x 14 feet) with a shingle roof (Building 2). Building 2 was extended in c1865 (and was modified in the 1920s or 1930s).

#### *c) Building 4*

In 1870 another weatherboard structure (14 feet x 10 feet) was constructed (Building 4), connecting the earlier buildings.

The owner of the land is listed in 1856-57 as Mr Greeves, and from 1857-62 as Joseph Hollows, a miner, who is likely to have built the original house. The owner from 1863-1866 was Mr Palmer, and Hollows was again listed as the owner in 1866-67.

The cottage has been used as a residence since it was built. During the early twentieth century it was owned by the Zwar Bros, who in 1888 had taken over the Beechworth tannery, which under their management became the largest country tannery in Australia. It was an important source of local employment and a major contributor to the Beechworth community, generating social activities such as annual picnics and cricket matches. The Zwar family wielded tremendous influence in the town until the tannery closed in 1961. 26 Finch Street was rented to an employee. It was bought in 1958 by Mr Cliff Stone, who lived in the house from 1939, and his son Ray lived there for more than thirty years from 1972.

In 2007 a single storey L-shaped extension, comprising a kitchen, living area, bathroom and laundry, was added to the rear of Building 3.

#### KEY REFERENCES USED TO PREPARE ASSESSMENT

Deborah Kemp, 'Conservation Management Plan for 26 Finch Street Beechworth', 2006.

#### Plaque Citation

This Picturesque Gothic style two-storey house and detached kitchen was built c1860 and added to in 1865 and 1870. It is typical of the modest houses of the time and demonstrates early construction techniques and materials.

#### Extent of Registration

##### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the **Heritage Act 1995**, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by modifying Heritage Register Number H352 in the category described as Heritage Place.

Residence  
26 Finch Street  
Beechworth  
Indigo Shire

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 352 encompassing all of Lot 1 on Title Plan 809097.

Dated 11 June 2015  
TIM SMITH  
Executive Director

[*Victoria Government Gazette* G23 11 June 2015 p.1303]

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*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*